

HUNTER EDUCATION

newsletter

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF HUNTER EDUCATION
THE NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

■ October 2009

Coordinator's Comments

Another busy year of Hunter Education courses comes to a close – many, many thanks for what you do to make this program a great success!

While there are a few classes still scheduled, initial numbers indicate fewer courses will have been conducted this year compared to last year, resulting in lower certification numbers statewide. This does not detract from the outstanding job you do, but I do need to ask how we can provide additional courses, especially in the more populated locations.

It is especially important in Fargo, Grand Forks, Devils Lake, Minot, Dickinson, Bismarck and Jamestown. We receive the most calls from the public about how they haven't been able to get into a course from the Bismarck and Fargo areas. While I can't tell you how many of these calls come from folks who don't plan ahead or just put things off until the last minute, it does indicate a need for more courses. Some of the calls are a result of new legislation and I would think the demand for additional courses will continue. We will always have people calling late in the year, just before hunting season starts, wondering why they can't get into a course. Their response after I tell them that there were 20-some courses conducted in Fargo already this year is one of surprise and humility as they realize that they simply missed the boat.

We certified 41 instructors last year and we are well on our way to certifying another 40 or more this year (our annual goal is 50). More than likely these newly certified instructors have become part of an established team and that's great. The issue becomes that the teams increase in size, but the number of courses being conducted remains the same.

We need to encourage assistant instructors to become lead instructors at some point; a few smaller teams would be able to support additional courses in some locations.

One other thing to consider is the instructor to student ratio; we have many smaller classes (25-40) that have a very high instructor-to-student ratio. It is possible to conduct a class of 60 with 4-6 instructors, and then ask additional instructors to come in and assist with the final exam and practical portion.

I am challenging you and your team to add another course next year, at the same time recruit new instructors and ask those who have instructed in the past to join you. Whether it's a traditional course or an online course, I think the demand is there and will continue to grow based on feedback. Online "Home Study" courses are increasing in popularity, by both students and instructors. The only recommendation that I have is that you do offer an optional "gun handling" session along with the required attendance.

These are ideas we need to consider as we move forward and I need your help in finding solutions. I'm not asking that every instructor add a course, but if your team is well established and can handle the load, consider increasing the number of students (provided that your facility can handle it) or scheduling an additional course. Begin planning now and remember to send us your course dates by December 31 so we can get them posted as soon as possible.

Again, thank you for all that you do, you are the reason for our successful and challenging Hunter Education Program. We have to be flexible and adjust to the changing times if we are to pass on our great hunting heritage without sacrificing safety.

Good hunting, enjoy the outdoors and be safe.

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Online Course Options

The other issue that I am asking you to consider is the conduct of our online courses or “Home Study”, as we refer to it. An end result of the recent legislative session is to stretch our ability to offer more options and access to the Hunter Education course. One of those options is to offer an online course that students can enroll into, complete the course on the computer and then enroll into a “Field Day” for the final exam with the practical exercise. This eliminates the initial session with an instructor, but still allows for an optional “gun handling” session and of course, the exam and practical. I will not support a complete online course, but this option does allow more flexibility to those wishing to complete Hunter Education and have competing schedules. It is being done this way in some states and it does work well; it does not compromise safety, but will require additional scheduling and instructor resources.

The initial thought is that this will work in the larger cities where we could have 25-30 attending the field day portion by scheduling one every two weeks or once a month, etc. When you consider the amount of time spent with the online course versus the traditional classroom option, it might be a great option for some instructors as well. Some instructors have considered scheduling a traditional course and an online course as opposed to two traditional courses during the year.

We need to figure out how we can provide more access to our program; we don't want to be told how to do it!

2009 ND State Fair “Pathway to Hunting”

Many thanks go out to all of you that volunteered your time to work at the 2009 State Fair! The satisfaction of working with both youth and adults makes this a very rewarding experience and I encourage you to consider this event next year. We work a little bit, relax, and enjoy some grilling and cool refreshments after we close!

Thanks again to: Karla Meikle, Lori Schweigert, Tyler Schweigert, Mark Walsh, Adnan Aldayel, Andy Robinson, Missy Fale, Paul Goldade, Josh Frey, Steve Loughrey, Maggie Triska, Lee Bratlie, Roger Krueger, Matt Leer, Steve Houston, Greg Buckert, Ty Dressler, Jim Boley, Barb & Marty Marchello, Dick Cheatley, Greg Hastings, Ben Hoesel, Mike Johnson, Gary Leslie, Shane Shefstad, Mel Birkholz, Daryl Simmons, Dave Rensch, Mike Feener, Ken Rehling, Mark Berg, Jerome Koenig, Jon Hughes, Kiri Linseth, Al Klatt, Steve Kukowski, Harry Capaci, Matt Sarasiel, John Schumacher, Dave Haugen, Levi Jacobson, Nick Bundermann, Seth Gaugler and Kathy & Mike Needham.

Please consider participating in this worthwhile event for a day or two or three! It is fun and well received by thousands of youth and adults each year. Lodging will be reimbursed for those that spend two days and live more than 50 miles from Minot. The State Fair dates for next year are July 23 – 31, 2010.

Bowhunter Education Student Manual

It has been some time since our Bowhunter Education Student manual has been revised and based on the interest in archery and bowhunting, I think it's time we have a new manual. I have ordered 50 “revised” student manuals from the National Bowhunter Education Foundation for your review. We did have a couple of instructor's use this revised manual in their classes and were very satisfied with it. If you are interested in reviewing this manual, drop me a note and I will send you a copy.

Blinds and Blaze Orange

In the August/September 2009 issue of the Outdoors magazine, there is an article that discusses hunting in blinds and the use of blaze orange. The lack of marking or identification when using a “camouflaged” treestand or blind is a major concern for hunter safety. The requirement is for the hunter to wear blaze orange, but it doesn't do much good when sitting in a camouflaged blind. I would ask that you add this topic into your HE classes and recommend to hunters that use either elevated or ground blinds mark the area and/or blind so that other hunters know there is someone else in the area! This can easily be done with an extra blaze orange cap, vest or a piece of material or manufactured signs. While there are some that feel we need legislated or mandated “regulations” regarding this, there is much to be said about education and awareness.

HE Student Exam

Most of you had the opportunity to use the revised exam and hopefully it went over well, I've received many positive comments, be sure to let us know if you encountered any problems! As a reminder: as you order your course materials, you will be receiving the exams and answer sheets, along with an instructor copy and answer key. The exam booklet is not to be written on, students will record all answers on the answer sheet; you should announce this before you hand out the exam. I would recommend numbering your exam booklets; this will assist you in accounting for all of them as students hand them in. Your instructor copy has the correct answers highlighted and a page number that refers you to where the answer is in the manual. Not all of the answers are "word for word" in the manual and if that's the case, the page number indicates where you can insert this discussion point. While these answers are not right out of the manual, I feel strongly that they are important, common sense topics that are hunting safety concerns (these are issues that will be considered when we revise the manual). The "A CHUM SPORT" is on the answer sheet, not in the exam booklet, so ensure that your students complete all portions of the exam! You also have a transparency overlay to use in the scoring of the test and we are working to improve this based on instructor feedback. The practical pass/fail is on the backside of the answer sheet. 90% is the passing score, which means that more than 6 wrong will require retesting or retaking the course.

Recruiting New Instructors

Continue your outstanding efforts in recruiting new instructors! You are recruiting your assistants and replacements, so select those that are the best of the best for the future of our program! One of the things that I stress to all new instructors is how important assisting a veteran instructor is and to be very comfortable before you take on the lead role.

Welcome to our new instructors since May (31 certified to date this year): Keith Brodie, Arvilla; Dennis Peltier, Belcourt; Rod Schwandt, Burlington; Jamey Boutilier Hazen; Andy Banta, Williston and Matt Haugen, Williston.

We have many "potential" instructors (37) that have been mailed an application and are somewhere in the process, if you should know any of these folks; please encourage them to finish the process and get certified!

North Dakota Hunter Educator's Association (NDHEA)

As a certified instructor you are eligible to become a member of our NDHEA, please contact the membership chairman, Charles Vasicek, 701-223-9797 or csvasicek@bis.midco.net. Together, we can work towards improving an already outstanding program through additional programs and activities. Visit the NDHEA website at www.ndhea.org for more information.

Instructor Contact Information

If you would like to be added to our Instructor Email distribution list, send me an email address! Please ensure that we have your correct contact information! We do get calls from students that need additional information specific to your course and they should be able to contact you. Call Steph at 701-328-6615 or 800-421-8358 or mail in the form on the back of the newsletter.

"One does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted." – Jose Ortega y Gasset, 1985, Meditations on Hunting

EVENT CALENDAR

Annual Conference

February 13, 2010 @ Bismarck Ramkota

Regional Workshops

January 16, 2010 @ Fargo

January 30 @ Minot

March 6, 2010 @ Grand Forks

March 20 @ Dickinson

State Fair

July 23 – July 31, 2010 @ Minot

WE'LL SEE YOU THERE!



**HUNTER EDUCATION
TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

For Class Supplies: 1-800-421-8358
For Procedure and Policy Questions: 1-701-328-6316

INSTRUCTOR'S CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM:

If you move, please be sure to notify us. Email changes to sthompso@nd.gov or complete the attached form and mail to:

North Dakota Game and Fish Department
Hunter Education
100 North Bismarck Expressway
Bismarck, ND 58501-5095

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Telephone No. _____



(Detach and return)

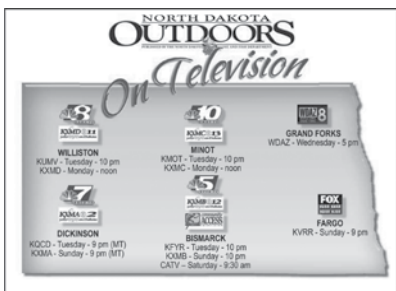


Federal & State Range Grants

If you have shooting organizations (gun or bow) in your city, and they are interested in receiving grant money for improvements to local shooting ranges, contact me! I have several organizations that have inquired about the process and I want to ensure that everyone is aware of this great opportunity so that we can spread the wealth. It's not millions of dollars, but it can be a real boost to your local range & community!

Instructor Resources

- Enclosed with your newsletter is the issue of the IHEA Hunter's Handbook and the Journal. The Hunter's Handbook is published for students and instructors and contains many good hunting/shooting sports articles and hunting equipment promotions. The Journal is intended for HE instructors, it has several good articles on classroom instruction and information that you can use - training resources and equipment discounts. We have 2,000 copies that you can hand out to your students, let us know how many you want and we will ship them with your materials.
- Check out page 69 of the Hunter's Handbook – students, instructors and program administrators are eligible to win one of many prizes. North Dakota had a winner drawn this past year, so it never hurts to register!
- Work continues on an on-line Instructor Training Course, we hope to see the product in Sep/Oct for our initial review. This site can be customized for each state with Game & Fish and Hunter Education information.
- We received a link to a great video clip produced by California Waterfowl entitled "Why Hunt". They use waterfowl to get the point across on the connection between humans and hunting. It is a great lesson for everyone, especially youth and the growing populations of non-hunters. Please take a look at this video and use it as an educational tool in the classroom or local wildlife club. I have permission from California Waterfowl to reproduce this video so if you are interested in a copy, let us know and we will send you one!
To view it, click on the link below or copy and paste into the browser bar -
<http://www.calwaterfowl.org/web2/programs/heritage/whyhuntvideo.htm>
- Don't forget, the newsletter is now posted on our website, under the Instructor log-in tab! (!huntered/Enroll1)



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Hunter Education Program

Jon Hanson, Hunter Education Coordinator



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